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New York

President:	Mr. Alotaibi	(Kuwait)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
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	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Eckels-Currie

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): This is my last briefing to the Council before my assignment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen comes to an end.

I began my assignment in April 2015, when Yemen was already embroiled in a conflict that has gradually destroyed its economy, health-care services, housing, roads and schools — everything that Yemenis need in order to live and prosper. The parties have maintained the destructive pattern of zero-sum politics that has plunged the country into more poverty and destruction. The decision makers in the conflict perceive concessions as weakness and dissent as a threat. Regrettably, they have consistency taken irresponsible and provocative actions that ignore the daily suffering of Yemenis generated by this conflict.

The past two months have witnessed a renewed and large-scale escalation of military confrontation in Al-Hudaydah, Al-Jawf, Sana'a and Al-Bayda, as well as areas along the Yemeni-Saudi border. The Houthis continue to fire ballistic missiles into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Fighting in Taiz governorate has been particularly bloody and destructive, while Aden and the neighbouring governorates have been the scenes of continuous clashes. During the latest outbreak of violence in the city on 28 January, dozens of people were killed and hundreds more were injured. I reiterate my call on all stakeholders in Aden to demonstrate self-restraint and avoid any inflammatory speech. I urge them to resolve their differences in a peaceful and constructive manner through dialogue.

I am also seriously concerned about reports from several humanitarian organizations on the recruitment of thousands of child soldiers by all parties to the conflict, which constitutes a flagrant violation of children's rights. While the reports indicate that all warring parties have engaged in such practices, the systematic recruitment of children by the Houthis may have negative implications for the future of the country. Parties must adhere to international law and international humanitarian law. Any intentional or direct attack on civilians or civilian objects is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. The parties must respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and ensure the access of affected populations to humanitarian assistance.

As the conflict has deepened, the economic and humanitarian crisis has deepened with it, making Yemen the world's largest man-made humanitarian crisis. John Ging will brief the Council on that issue. Since 2015, Yemen's economy has shrunk by almost 40 per cent. In 2017, the value of the Yemeni rial dropped by more than 50 per cent. The decline of the currency and the related sharp increase in prices have had a negatively affected the economy and have thereby hampered the delivery of basic supplies.

These factors have had a direct affect on the private sector and the payment of salaries of the public-sector employees. Undoubtedly, the non-payment of salaries for more than a year constitutes a massive burden on Yemeni citizens. Indeed, it has become clear that revenues that should be contributing to salary payments, maintaining basic services and stimulating the economy are instead being used to fund the war. Moreover, informal taxation and other forms of corruption are flourishing, exacerbating the humanitarian situation. These factors mean that Yemeni households are losing their purchase power and access to basic services. Some 22.2 million Yemenis are now in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, compared to 15.9 million in March 2015.

In the context of these appalling and vast humanitarian challenges, I welcome the generous

pledge of $1 billion by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support humanitarian action and reconstruction in Yemen, as well as their commitment to raising an additional $500 million from other donors in the region. I hope that these initiatives will materialize and that the funds pledged will be disbursed as soon as possible so as to improve the current precarious situation.

Yemeni women humanitarianave suffered some of the worst effects of the conflict. The space for women to exercise their rights is shrinking every day. I have heard many Yemeni women saying that they live in a big prison where their freedom of speech is restricted. Those who speak up face the constant threat of persecution and violent attempts to silence them. However, despite these daily challenges, Yemeni women are remarkably resilient and their inclusion in the peace process is critical. The same applies to young people in Yemen.

I would like to express my gratitude to the World Bank for its innovative approach in Yemen, which is unique to a country in conflict. The partnership between my Office and the World Bank, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, has contributed not only to the alleviation of the suffering of some of the most vulnerable families, but also to the long-term preservation of Yemen's institutions.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the group of 18 Ambassadors with accreditation to Yemen and the States that have hosted talks with the parties, including Switzerland, Kuwait and Oman. During the past few weeks, I have visited several countries of the region, as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council secretariat. They are fully aware of the importance of a peaceful solution to this conflict in order to stabilize the region and fight terrorism.

Over the past three years, and throughout my continuous meetings with the parties, I have come to believe that a solid foundation for an agreement has been laid through the endorsement of the general framework in Biel in 2015 and the discussions that took place in Kuwait in 2016. Those who follow the Yemen file closely will acknowledge that the United Nations has spared no effort to help the Yemeni parties reach a peaceful solution. During the course of my interactions with the parties, we have discussed all the details of a peace road map with a clear timeline, taking into account the parties' needs and challenges. Today, I would like to announce, for the first time, that we were about to reach agreement on a peace proposal, developed in consultation with the parties, but they refused to sign at the last minute. By the end of the consultations, it had become clear that the Houthis were not prepared to make concessions on the proposed security arrangements or even to go into details about a comprehensive security plan. This has been a major stumbling block towards reaching a negotiated solution.

We see daily reports of civilians dying of poverty, hunger or illness, but we should not forget that many politicians from all sides are profiting from this conflict, from trading in arms to exploiting public property for personal purposes. In their speeches, these politicians may stir up strife to deepen the rift in the Yemeni society; at other times, they declare pro-peace positions, while in private they are indifferent to the suffering of their people. Whoever wants peace offers solutions, not excuses.

We have a peace road map for Yemen. The practical suggestions to launch it and build confidence among the parties have been agreed. The only part missing is the commitment of parties to making concessions and giving priority to the national interest. This is what makes us doubtful of their real intention to end the war. I wish the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, every success in his efforts, which I have no doubt will benefit from his wide-ranging experience in diplomacy. I hope that the road map will constitute a cornerstone for moving forward and activating the peace process.

To conclude, let me offer a promise, convey my thanks and issue an appeal.

I promise the Yemeni people that I will follow up on the file with the concerned and share my experience and knowledge of the Yemeni issue in any possible way that will contribute to peace. I was in Yemen before becoming a Special Envoy and I have experienced the courage and manners of the people of Yemen. I will follow the progress of the file until Yemen returns to Yemen, even after the end of my assignment.

My thanks also go out to the members of the Council and the international community for their support to the United Nations-led mediation efforts during the past three years, including the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The call goes to the Yemeni parties, who are solely responsible for everything that is happening. I

call on them to turn the page on this appalling war in history of Yemen. The United Nations is facilitating the path towards peace, and the international community is creating a favourable environment for it. Only the Yemeni decision-makers can stop the war and the bloodshed. I repeat: only they can do that.

The regional scenario is replete with challenges, political and sectarian disputes and economic pressures. There is no doubt that the developments in recent months in Yemen will reshuffle the political cards and change some internal blocs, especially considering the pressure and challenges encountered by the General People's Conference, in addition to the emergence of popular calls from the south voicing their demands. I call on the parties to cease hostilities and reactivate negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement. I urge them to allow the culture of coexistence to prevail over the rhetoric of war, so that Yemen becomes a beacon of light in the Middle East and a model for peace and security where men and women, young men and women, from the east and the west and from the north and south participate in decision-making.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ging.

Mr. Ging: I provide this update to the Security Council today on behalf of Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

After three years of conflict, conditions in Yemen are catastrophic. A record 22.2 million people need humanitarian assistance or protection, including 8.4 million people who are severely food-insecure. About 400,000 children under the age of 5 are so severely malnourished that they are 10 times likelier to die without treatment than their healthy peers. Approximately 2 million people remain displaced, 90 per cent of whom fled their homes more than a year ago. Nearly 1.1 million are suspected of having cholera. That has been reported since April 2017, in what experts have called the world's worst cholera outbreak. An estimated 3 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence.

Those figures represent an urgent call to action that humanitarian workers, the vast majority of whom are Yemeni citizens, are striving to answer. Working with nearly 200 partners, the United Nations-coordinated response is making a tremendous difference for millions of people across the country. In 2017, we progressively increased the number of people receiving emergency food assistance every month, from 3 million to more than 7 million. We delivered enough medicine to health facilities to treat 3.2 million people and conducted 1.5 million medical consultations. By maintaining public water networks, we ensured access to drinking water for 2 million people, in addition to trucking water directly to nearly 1 million more of the most vulnerable in December alone. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network estimates that nine of Yemen's 22 governorates would be one step closer to famine, or worse, without humanitarian assistance.

And yet people's lives have continued to unravel. Conflict has escalated significantly since November, driving an estimated 100,000 people from their homes, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. More people are going hungry, and famine remains a real threat. Although cholera cases are in decline, the disease is not yet beaten and is likely to rebound in the upcoming rainy season. In the meantime, a diphtheria outbreak has emerged, the first since 1982. Those are the consequences of a man-made crisis that only a political solution can bring to an end.

The most urgent task for all parties is to cease hostilities and engage meaningfully with the United Nations to achieve a lasting political settlement. In the meantime, as noted by the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator to the Council in November, there are other areas where we need to see immediate progress. Those priorities were conveyed to the Governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as to the authorities in Sana'a, with assurances from all parties that they would swiftly be implemented. Therefore, allow me to update members on where we stand.

The first issue concerns the resources needed for an effective response. In January, the United Nations and partners released the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion to assist 13.1 million people. Securing full funding for the plan is a top priority, which is why the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated $50 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund at the beginning of the year — the largest single allocation in its history. Later in January, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced a generous joint pledge of $1 billion for Yemen,

including $930 million for the humanitarian response plan. They also committed to raising $500 million from other donors in the region. In discussions this month, the Saudi and Emirati Governments confirmed that they would transfer $930 million by 31 March and outlined grant management terms very much in keeping with the spirit of the "grand bargain". Other donors have also stepped forward. But even with the support announced to date, the humanitarian response plan would remain only about one-third funded. On 3 April, the Secretary-General will convene a pledging conference in Geneva, hosted by Sweden and Switzerland, where all donors will have an opportunity to work together to provide the resources needed for the response.

The second issue is humanitarian access into and within the country, which all parties are required to allow and facilitate under international humanitarian law. Such access must be safe, rapid and unimpeded. Access within Yemen — particularly in areas controlled by the Sana'a authorities — has deteriorated. Authorities in Sana'a continue to delay humanitarian movements and to impose bureaucratic impediments that interfere with humanitarian action. They include long delays in customs clearance for essential supplies, such as diphtheria treatment and fuel, ad hoc restrictions on movements of humanitarian partners and refusal to authorize humanitarian assessments. In recent weeks, humanitarian staff have also been temporarily detained without justification and their equipment confiscated at checkpoints. In practice, those restrictions are often eventually resolved through dialogue, but the time lost represents an unacceptable delay for people who need assistance. While the restrictions appear to have intensified in recent months, we remain optimistic that the Sana'a authorities may still honour the assurances given to the Emergency Relief Coordinator during his visit in October.

Access into Yemen has improved after the blockade imposed by the Coalition came to an end in December. United Nations flights and vessels have been travelling as scheduled since 26 November, and regular humanitarian staff rotations and cargo shipments have mostly resumed. We have also received assurances that there will be no further disruption to those services. Today our main challenge in entering Yemen is the Coalition policy to divert containerized cargo to Aden, including relief items shipped in containers aboard commercial vessels, which is often the most cost-effective option. That policy creates delays and higher operating costs. Sana'a airport remains closed to commercial traffic, thereby preventing thousands of patients from travelling abroad to seek medical care. We are hopeful that solutions can be found shortly.

The third issue is related to commercial imports. Even before the crisis, Yemen imported about 90 per cent of its staple food and nearly all medicine and fuel. Maintaining the flow of commercial imports through all ports is essential to people's survival. Most imports have historically arrived via Hudaydah, which is the closest port to 70 per cent of people in need. Disruptions to commercial import flows have immediate consequences, including in food prices, which are increasing, against the backdrop of the risk of famine. In January 2018, a food basket was on average 55 per cent more expensive than before the escalation of conflict in 2015.

Commercial food and fuel imports have only partially recovered. One factor appears to be the lack of confidence among commercial shippers. The number of vessels seeking clearance to enter Hudaydah and Saleef ports has halved since the blockade. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mission is an effective system for screening imports bound for those ports, and there have recently been efforts to strengthen it further. Vessels cleared by that mechanism should be able to proceed directly to port without additional delays. Fuel imports are crucial for Yemen, including for the operation of public water networks and medical facilities. In January, United Nations agencies received 175,000 litres of fuel, provided by the Coalition, and distributed it to 16 health centres and water networks in the north and south. Such imports, which increase the commercial and humanitarian fuel supply, as well as other goods, must continue. For that to happen, Hudaydah and Saleef ports must remain open without time limits or other restrictions that may discourage commercial shipping companies from serving them.

The last major issue where we had hoped to see immediate progress relates to civil servant salary payments. Since August 2016, 1.2 million public employees and their families, or one quarter of the entire population, have not received regular salaries. Non-payment of salaries, including for approximately 30,000 health workers and 193,000 teachers, has accelerated the decline in public services, as workers seek alternative livelihoods. That has left families struggling to make ends meet. The resulting collapse in basic services has become a major driver of the

humanitarian crisis. The United Nations and its partners cannot replace the public sector and, while some salaries have reportedly been paid in the south, regular salary payments must quickly resume across the country.

Finally, it remains important to emphasize that protection concerns remain at the centre of the response. As mentioned, conflict has recently escalated, putting civilians at even greater risk. All parties to the conflict are obliged to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian infrastructure in military operations. Yet we continue to see civilian harm. Houthi-affiliated forces continue to shell populated areas, often resulting in civilian casualties. On 26 December, a Coalition air strike on a market in Taizz killed at least 60 civilians, including eight children, and wounded 32, including six children.

There are many such examples on all sides of the conflict. I call on all parties to uphold their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Likewise, I urge Member States to take all possible steps to ensure that the parties to the conflict comply with the law and to support accountability for violations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ging for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): First, I would like to thank our briefers for their updates on the situation in Yemen. I also want to warmly thank Mr. Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless efforts over the past three years to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. We recognize that it has been an incredibly challenging task and we appreciate everything he has done to bring the parties back the table and to create the conditions for sustainable peace, often at great personal risk to himself. I thank him on behalf of the United Kingdom. I would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new United Nations Special Envoy. I pledge the United Kingdom's full support for his future efforts.

As we have just heard from the United Nations, the conflict in Yemen has caused the world's most devastating humanitarian crisis. More than 22 million people, more than three-quarters of the population, are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Of those 22 million people more than half require immediate help to save or sustain life. They will not survive unless they receive assistance. The United Kingdom is committed to providing that assistance to the people of Yemen. We are the second-largest donor the United Nations Yemen appeal, and the third-largest donor to the United Nations overall. We provided $286 million to the appeal in the financial year 2017-2018. We also continue to work hard in order to reach consensus on a draft presidential statement from the Security Council aimed at responding to the recent developments on the ground.

Despite the devastating humanitarian situation, last year's appeal was only 70 per cent funded. This year, as the situation deteriorates further, we have just heard that the United Nations is requesting a record $2.96 billion. The recent pledge made by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to contribute $930 million to the 2018 appeal is very welcome, as is their commitment to disburse it by the end of March. The upcoming pledging conference, to be hosted by Sweden and Switzerland, is also an opportunity to respond to the United Nations appeal to help the starving people of Yemen. We call upon all donors to answer this call and ensure that all pledges are disbursed in a timely manner.

However, aid alone will not address the needs of the Yemeni people. Imports of food, fuel and medicine continue to remain well below levels of need. All parties to the conflict must allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen, which is essential to avert the risk of mass starvation. All plans and efforts to improve access are welcome. However, that can be no substitute for full and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access to the Red Sea ports of Hudaydah and Saleef. Eighty per cent of Yemen's imports enter the country through those ports. Other ports lack the necessary berthing, storage and milling capacities, and it takes days to transport goods by road across multiple conflict front lines to reach those in need.

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has not only given rise to the world's largest humanitarian crisis, it has also created ungoverned spaces in which terrorist can operate, posed security threats to regional countries and international shipping and fuelled regional tensions. That is demonstrated by the ballistic missile launches by the Houthis against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and their stated intention to launch attacks against the United Arab Emirates and to block

the Red Sea international shipping lane. We agree with the Panel of Experts' conclusion that missiles fired by the Houthis — of Iranian origin and provided after the imposition of the arms embargo — mean that Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015). We call upon Iran to cease all and any activity that fuels the conflict in Yemen. Until an enduring political settlement is reached, the sanctions regime is a critical tool to deter those who would otherwise use violence to achieve their political aims.

Humanitarian aid and access will provide only temporary relief for the people of Yemen. Ultimately, a political settlement is by far the best way to address the humanitarian crisis and security threats emanating from Yemen. We call upon all parties to engage constructively with the incoming Special Envoy and to abandon preconditions in order to restart the political process. All members of the Council should employ all of their influence over the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Before I start, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Parliament. Their attendance today is a great honour for my delegation.

I would like to convey our particular gratitude to Special Envoy Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his final briefing to the Security Council, and especially for his persistent efforts over the past three years in trying to bring the parties together to solve this terrible conflict. His words instil in us a powerful sense of urgency.

The human tragedy in Yemen, man-made and entirely avoidable, is one of the largest food and health crises the world has seen in decades. Today I will focus on three issues, namely, the political process, the humanitarian imperative and accountability.

First, regarding the political process, it is essential that all parties seize this moment to turn the negative trend of the past year around. As pointed out by the Panel of Experts, there is a grave risk of fragmentation in Yemen. If local grievances and regional divisions are not addressed, a political agreement is unlikely to last. Therefore, the political process must be an inclusive one. It should include a broad range of Yemeni groups, with the meaningful participation of women and youth.

That brings me to my second point, namely, the humanitarian imperative. In the absence of a political settlement, we draw the Council's attention to the humanitarian crisis. The protection of civilians from the armed conflict must be front and centre in our efforts. We have consistently condemned all indiscriminate attacks that have had a disastrous impact on the civilian population, including the Houthi ballistic missiles against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The people of Yemen suffer from the incessant fighting, and, as least as much, from the lack of food, water, sanitation, fuel and access to health care. Ensuring safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is not an act of mercy, it is an obligation under international law.

We welcome the positive steps that have been taken, including the installation of cranes at Hudeydah port and the generous pledge of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the humanitarian response plan. Nonetheless, further steps are still needed, such as full and sustained access for all humanitarian and commercial shipments to all of Yemen's ports and airports. The Yemeni people cannot survive on humanitarian aid alone. Furthermore, all parties should fully cooperate with the work of the United Nations verification and inspection mechanism. Fast clearing services for shipping companies transporting commercial imports are pivotal. We call on all member States to refrain from inspecting vessels that have already been cleared by the mechanism. We will continue to work with all our partners in the Council to have those issues addressed in the presidential statement to be made in the coming days.

Let me also take this opportunity to salute those working both outside and inside of the country to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni population. The humanitarian community works under very difficult circumstances and it deserves our praise, gratitude and support.

My third point is on the issue of accountability. In recent months we have seen an increase in the number of civilian casualties. The obligations of all parties under international humanitarian law are very clear. We once again urgently call on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law. Together we must foster adherence to the law. The Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was mandated by the Human Rights Council to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses and to identify those responsible. In that context, let me highlight in particular the rampant gender-based violence, as highlighted by Mr. Ging earlier. The Group of Experts

has begun its work, and should receive full support and access from all parties to fulfil its mandate.

In conclusion, we again demand meaningful political negotiations, humanitarian access and respect for the law. My Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sigrid Kaag, recently visited the region. She raised concerns about these persistent issues with all counterparts, thereby demonstrating our long-standing commitment to the Yemeni people. This year the Kingdom of the Netherlands marks 40 years of bilateral development cooperation with Yemen. We are long-standing partners. Therefore, Yemen remains a priority for us, both inside and outside of the Council.

My Minister also received encouraging messages suggesting that many parties are eager to engage with the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We welcome his appointment and assure him of our full support. Let us give him sufficient time to build on the work already done, talk to the parties and put forward his initial ideas. The Council should then consider further concrete steps on how to support his efforts. Only when the parties show the courage and leadership to make the necessary compromises and put the interests of the Yemeni people before their own will a sustainable political solution be possible.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I would like to warmly thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his excellent briefing, outstanding work, exemplary commitment, tireless efforts and his determination in spite of difficult challenges and risks to his own life. I would like to convey my country's profound respect and gratitude for his efforts. I also thank Mr. John Ging for his briefing, which again underscored the extreme gravity of the situation.

I will focus my statement today on four main points — the political and security stalemate in Yemen, the ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the impact of the crisis on the region and the importance of an urgent resumption of the political process.

The situation in Yemen has become increasingly complex over recent years and weeks. Following the assassination of former President Saleh, a coalition of groups from the south of Yemen opposed to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour has assumed control of the vast majority of Aden, where Government headquarters is located. That recent development has diminished the prospects for a political settlement, but should not serve to call into question the territorial sovereignty of Yemen, to which we are all deeply committed. There are several conflicts: between the Government of President Hadi and the Houthis, between the Houthis and the Arab coalition, between the supporters of former President Saleh and the Houthis, and between the groups from the south of Yemen and the Government. Al-Qaida- and Da'esh-affiliated groups are also present and active as the primary beneficiaries of the prevailing chaos.

The main victims of the many conflicts are civilians. The Yemeni people are plagued by a humanitarian disaster. Three quarters of the Yemeni people are in need of assistance. More than 2 million of them are displaced. More than 18 million are affected by food insecurity and at risk of starvation. There is dearth of basic necessities and health risks, such as diphtheria and cholera, remain high, as was eloquently mentioned earlier, at a time when health and medical infrastructure has been crippled. Our priority must be to address one of the worst crises in the world by delivering comprehensive, secure, unimpeded humanitarian access to the people affected in all Yemeni governorates. That access must guaranteed and sustained. The coalition's humanitarian plan is an encouraging step forward and should be commended. It is critical to ensure that it be effective and delivered in full cooperation with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Financial assistance for the Yemeni Central Bank is another step in the right direction in the light of economic difficulties that have just been mentioned. It is also essential that humanitarian and commercial goods transit through all ports, including Hudeydah and Saleef, and all airports, in particular Sana'a. The blockade must be lifted again to enable the greatest amount of predictability for humanitarian and commercial actors. Inspection efforts conducted by the United Nations verification and inspection mechanism to ensure that cargo entering Yemen does not contain goods that violate the embargo must continue. We continue to emphatically condemn any attempt to divert humanitarian assistance. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians must cease. International humanitarian law must be fully respected. The crisis also has an impact on security in the region. We are concerned about the continued deterioration of regional stability and security. Yesterday we voted on a technical roll-over of the sanctions regime, which will enable the Panel of Experts to continue their important work. However, we

regret that the Council was not able to agree on the first draft resolution vote on (S/2018/156).

We have voiced our concerns about the conclusions of the report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen issued on 15 February and have repeatedly condemned the ballistic-missile launches staged by the Houthis, specifically against Saudi Arabia. As we mentioned yesterday, France will remain galvanized on the question of the transfer of technology and ballistic material throughout the region in the months to come. This is an issue that the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, will address in Tehran during his visit on 5 March.

In this critical context, France's demands are clear, namely, a ceasefire and secure, comprehensive and unfettered humanitarian access. This is not optional but an obligation under international humanitarian law that is binding on all parties, which we would stress to all parties to the conflict. The more entrenched the conflict becomes, the more evident it appears that there can be no military solution in Yemen. The appointment of the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Griffiths, affords an opportunity for all parties to meaningfully re-engage, without preconditions, in the negotiations. We must continue to convey to regional actors a clear message about the importance of playing a responsible and constructive role in Yemen; this is critical.

Our common goal must remain to arrive at a lasting cessation of hostilities and to encourage the parties to rekindle dialogue, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement in a manner that respects the country's territorial integrity.

In concluding, let me say that we hope that the resumption of the political process will help to break this disastrous deadlock. Let us be cautious, in this context, to avoid creating divisions among us that could have serious consequences. The unity and commitment of the Security Council on this issue are prerequisites to arrive at this necessary resumption of the political process. France will continue to spare no effort to achieve that end.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I, too, would like to begin by thanking the Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his briefing to the Council today. As this is his final briefing as Special Envoy, I would like to acknowledge his determination, unwavering commitment and indispensable optimism over these last three years. It is hard to imagine a more difficult job. Let me also thank John for his sobering and frank briefing on the humanitarian situation.

It has been almost three months since the Council last met to discuss the situation in Yemen. This does not reflect the urgency on the ground. Since we last met, the violence has escalated, and civilian casualties have continued to mount; the humanitarian situation for ordinary Yemenis is deplorable and only getting worse. This suffering stems first and foremost from the conflict.

The Council's current efforts are clearly insufficient to meet our responsibility to alleviate the world's worst humanitarian crisis and to end this bloody conflict, which is now in its fourth year. In recent weeks, despite the well-known differences within the Council's membership, we have worked together to find consensus on responding to the humanitarian situation in Syria. It is now incumbent upon us to make the same effort when it comes to Yemen.

Today I would like to focus on how we can step up our efforts on both the humanitarian and political situation in Yemen.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, we have just heard from Mr. Ging what is needed to alleviate the indescribable suffering of the 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance or protection.

First, the Council must strongly reiterate the call for a durable cessation of hostilities that we made in our presidential statement last June (S/PRST/2017/7).

Secondly, we must demand that all parties fully meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. This includes ensuring the protection of civilians, including the most vulnerable, by taking all precautions to avoid harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure. All attacks on civilians, including missile attacks by the Houthis, must be strongly condemned. We are also worried about reported attacks and threats against and the unlawful detention of journalists and other persons promoting freedom of expression.

Thirdly, we must help to ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian and commercial shipments. The recent positive steps taken by the coalition, including the resumption of humanitarian flights and the delivery of cranes to Hudaydah, are welcome. It is now essential to ensure that all of Yemen's ports remain open and

fully functional and that their capacities increase. We call on all parties to refrain from any action that would restrict the flow of life-saving food, medicine and fuel.

Fourthly, the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan needs to be fully funded in order to allow the United Nations and its partners to respond to the massive humanitarian needs. To that end, and as has already been noted this morning, Sweden and Switzerland, together with the United Nations, will host the 2018 High-level Pledging Event for Yemen on 3 April in Geneva. We encourage all Member States to participate and to pledge generously. We appreciate the generous pledges already made by the coalition.

Finally, as we were able to do over the weekend in response to the humanitarian situation in Syria, the Council should speak clearly and set the standards for responding to the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We should now focus our efforts on uniting around this task.

Moving to the political situation, the appointment of a new Special Envoy offers an opportunity to relaunch the political process. It is essential that the Council unite in giving strong practical support to the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, to create the conditions needed to seize this opportunity. Members of the Council and regional actors must use all their influence to ensure that the parties engage constructively with Mr. Griffiths, his Office and the United Nations-led process in good faith.

A political solution can be achieved only through a broad and inclusive political process. We should strive to help the Special Envoy to rekindle the initial spirit of the National Dialogue Conference and insist on meaningful political participation by a broad range of Yemeni actors, including women, youth and marginalized groups.

The situation in Yemen is desperate. Civilians live in constant fear for their lives. It is high time that the international community, including the Council, give the situation the attention it deserves.

Ms. Eckels-Currie (United States of America): First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless commitment to resolving this conflict. The United States appreciates his leadership and advocacy for peace and security, especially his efforts on behalf of Yemeni women and children, the most innocent victims of this conflict. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours and appreciate his commitment to stay engaged in this issue. We also thank John for his sober and sombre assessment of the situation on the ground. We are grateful for the work that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations agencies are doing to alleviate human suffering in Yemen.

Now more than ever, it is critical that the United Nations continue its work towards resolving the situation in Yemen. Yemen is witness to the world's worst humanitarian crisis today. After three years of brutal civil war, 75 per cent of the population is now in need of humanitarian assistance. The most basic Government services are missing in many parts of the country. Houthi aggression, with the support of Iran, threatens stability in the region, and terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Al-Qaida have exploited this opportunity to pursue their twisted agendas. Only a political solution will provide the enduring peace and stability that the people of Yemen deserve, so we must do all we can to achieve that outcome. The leadership of the United Nations is absolutely essential, and the Council must give it full support to facilitate a successful political process. But as we work towards a political solution, it is imperative that we do everything we can to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the people of Yemen are met.

First, the people of Yemen must have access to and be able to afford essential goods. Since Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's last briefing, we have been heartened by the arrival of the four mobile World Food Programme (WFP) cranes funded by the United States. Now that they are in place at Hudaydah port, it is imperative that we work to reduce the time to offload much-needed supplies. The United States welcomes the continued efforts by the Saudi-coalition to address the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including a pledge to provide $930 million by 31 March to the United Nations and humanitarian organizations.

We will continue to coordinate with the Saudi-led coalition, the United Nations, our international partners and humanitarian organizations to refine the Yemen comprehensive humanitarian operations plan, in order to ensure that it is thorough and coordinated with the international humanitarian response. The United States has provided more than $760 million in lifesaving humanitarian assistance since September 2016. We will continue to do our part to fund those urgent needs, as the United States always has. Similarly, we are pleased

that the Saudi-led coalition has agreed to keep the port of Hudaydah open to all commercial and humanitarian goods, including fuel. The most efficient and effective way to get food and fuel to those in need is through that port. The United States will continue to work with countries in the Saudi-led coalition to achieve additional improvements in humanitarian access.

In addition to addressing Yemen's humanitarian concerns, however, we must also recognize the very real security concerns of Saudi Arabia. As we discussed in the Council yesterday (see S/PV.8190), it is incumbent on the Council to directly address verifiable threats to peace and security in the region, and the main culprit behind them. As the Panel of Experts report (S/2018/68) makes clear, Iran is violating the targeted arms embargo laid out in resolution 2216 (2015). Specifically, the Panel found that missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels into Saudi Arabia last year were of Iranian origin and introduced into Yemen after the imposition of the targeted arms embargo.

We saw the Russian delegation wield a veto yesterday to prevent the Yemen sanctions resolution from including a mention of Iran's activities in Yemen. However, the evidence shows quite clearly that ballistic missiles were Iranian in origin. Last month in Washington, D.C., Council members saw at first-hand some of the evidence implicating Iran. Eleven Council members agreed with us that such concerns merited mention in the sanctions resolution, and only two Council members voted against it. We will continue to stand up and remind the Council that we have an obligation to call out malign and destabilizing behaviour whenever and wherever we see it. Iran cannot violate Security Council sanctions with impunity. The Council must hold accountable those that, like Iran, violate sanctions, and ensure that Iranian military technologies, ballistic missiles, waterborne improvised explosive devices, sea mines, military unmanned aerial vehicles and other weaponry are prevented from reaching designated individuals and entities in Yemen.

Doing more to address the severe humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people, while taking measures to prevent the free flow of weaponry into Yemen, is essential to paving the way for the political solution that we all agree is necessary. We need to see genuine engagement from the parties, and we are prepared to support all efforts to that end. In that regard, we look forward to working with the newly appointed Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and hope that we will see real progress in 2018 towards a lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Mr. John Ging for their briefings, and we commend Mr. Ahmed for his work in his post and his contribution, as well as his efforts to reach a settlement to the conflict in Yemen. We also want to thank the Permanent Representative of Peru for his work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

We felt it was important that yesterday we succeeded in extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen in a largely technical and apolitical manner. That has helped us preserve a window of opportunity for further non-confrontational cooperation with the aim of making progress towards a settlement in Yemen. The Yemeni conflict is exceedingly difficult and complicated. We must find ways to launch the peace process without preconditions rather than looking for scapegoats and creating the results desired for geopolitical agendas.

We listened attentively Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's analysis of recent events in Yemen, leaving us a singular historical legacy of the attempts to establish a political process. We hope the new Special Envoy will draw the requisite conclusions from the work that has already been done. We are obliged to conclude that so far we have been unable to get an effective process going. At the same time, the situation on the ground, particularly on the humanitarian front, has all the appearances of a disaster. The official statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs suggest that 22 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, although in reality things are far worse. Millions of Yemenis are starving. The country is in the grip of cholera and diphtheria epidemics. The estimated numbers of casualties of the conflict are more than 9,000 dead and 52,000 wounded. Some 1.5 million Yemeni civil servants in the north and south have not been paid for more than a year and a half.

We see and note the fact that a great deal is being done to improve the humanitarian situation. We commend the efforts of the United Nations, as well as the individual contributions of a host of Member States, including Yemen's closest neighbours, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, the characteristics of such regional conflicts lead us to believe that

humanitarian assistance alone cannot deliver viable long-term solutions. It is essential to immediately shift the current situation onto a track leading to political dialogue. In this critical situation, it will be important for the United Nations to have a clear plan for further action. Martin Griffiths, the new Special Envoy, will have a key role to play in that, and we wish him every success. We hope that in his consultations with all the parties to the conflict he can come up with a plan of action and present it to the Council in his next report.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his briefing. We thank and commend him for his hard work. We would also like to affirm our support to the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, whose task will be focused on bringing together the parties and reaching a political solution to the conflict. I would also like to thank Mr. John Ging for his detailed briefing on this critical situation.

We are once again driven to lament the fact that, despite the Security Council's repeated calls to the parties to resume a political dialogue, as well as the tireless efforts of the international community to mitigate the severe humanitarian crisis that is overwhelming Yemen, we are again witnessing a dangerous escalation in armed clashes, with a high humanitarian cost. It is deeply regrettable that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/7) adopted on 15 June 2017 by the Security Council, which calls on the parties to commit to guaranteeing immediate and unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance, agreeing to a ceasefire and initiating dialogue with a view to reaching a political solution to the conflict, has been completely ignored and violated by the parties. There is evidence for that in the alarming increase in violence in Hudaydah governorate, which has caused the displacement of more than 14,000 families since the beginning of this year, now unfortunately added to the more than 85,000 people who have been forced to leave their homes since December 2017, leading to a total of more than 2 million internally displaced persons today.

Furthermore, the reports from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs say that the road that links the people of Al-Jarrahi and Hays in Hudaydah governorate is blocked, and other reports state that anti-personnel mines may have been planted along it. That situation constitutes an imminent threat to the civilian population travelling along it or using it to flee the clashes, as well as to convoys delivering humanitarian assistance that rely on it.

The worrying increase in bellicose language and activities have created a highly precarious situation in Yemen, putting more than three fourths of the population in need of urgent humanitarian assistance just to survive. It is essential to ensure and to facilitate access for, and the free movement of, cooperation and humanitarian aid agencies to provide the assistance and medical care needed to deal with the outbreak of cholera in 22 of the 23 governorates, which, according to the briefing that we have just received, has infected more than 1 million people and caused more than 2,200 deaths. In addition to that, there is the dangerous spread of diphtheria, which, according to the World Health Organization report of 10 February of this year, has led to more than 1,000 suspected cases and 64 deaths linked to the disease.

In that context, we are concerned about the reports of the precarious situation in which health-care centres must operate, such as the Hays hospital, the main health-care centre of Hudaydah governorate, which has not functioned since 10 December, when it was seriously damaged by aerial bombardments.

Bolivia echoes the statement of the Secretary-General on 3 December calling on the parties to restore access to all ports and to re-establish the entry of the imports on which the lives of 22 million people, who urgently need some kind of humanitarian assistance, depend. The Security Council must be clear when calling on all parties to ensure the full and continuous operation of all ports, airports and their access roads, in particular to Hudaydah and Saleef seaports and Sana'a airport. The parties must also be urged to comply with the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015).

For all those reasons, we reiterate our call for the Council to maintain a unanimous and firm stance in condemning the belligerent acts and campaigns that exacerbate the crisis in Yemen and give rise to a dangerous instability that threatens the lives of the 27 million innocent people living in the country. We call on the States and international actors with influence on the parties and stakeholders involved to exercise their good offices to prevent the crisis from becoming the greatest failure of the Organization since its establishment.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen, for his comprehensive briefing and his efforts in supporting Yemen's return to a peaceful political transition. I appreciate the very objective briefing by Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Allow me to share our observations.

Poland is deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the disastrous humanitarian situation in Yemen, where a record number of 22 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. Swift and decisive actions are required in order to put an end to the worst man-made humanitarian disaster. The continued flow of food, fuel and medical supplies must be guaranteed and the continuity of imports must be ensured. To that end, it is paramount that all Yemeni ports remain permanently open to both humanitarian and commercial shipments. We therefore urge all actors to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to end administrative obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian and commercial goods.

Poland welcomes the United Nations 2018 humanitarian response plan for Yemen, as well as the pledge by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support humanitarian action in Yemen. We call for the quick implementation of that initiative in order to improve the living conditions of the Yemeni people.

We are gravely alarmed by the recent upsurge in violence in Yemen, especially in Taiz and Hudaydah governorates, which has resulted in an increase in civilian casualties and the further displacement of thousands of Yemeni citizens, who have been forced to flee their homes. We call on all parties to cease attacks against civilians as well as the indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, which continues to exacerbate the humanitarian situation. Under international humanitarian law, all parties are obliged to ensure the protection of civilians. Furthermore, we would like to stress the need for a firm and swift response to deal with all violations of human rights in Yemen committed by any party involved in the conflict. We consider any such action to be a clear violation of international law.

We strongly believe that there will be no significant improvement in the security and humanitarian situation in Yemen until a long-term political solution to the conflict is reached. We therefore strongly support the resumption of the United Nations-facilitated intra-Yemeni inclusive political process with the full participation of all relevant parties and stakeholders, as well as all sectors of Yemeni society, including women and young people.

We look forward to the assumption by Mr. Martin Griffiths of his post as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen. We call on all parties to engage constructively with him in good faith and without preconditions. We also call on the parties to agree on the modalities for a durable cessation of hostilities.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I wish to thank Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing. We greatly appreciate his service and tireless efforts to bring about a diplomatic solution to the Yemeni crisis. He was entrusted with a very difficult, complex and challenging task. I would add that we believe that he did his utmost to discharge his responsibilities with courage and commitment. We also thank Director John Ging for his briefing, and we reiterate our appreciation to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for their dedicated and selfless service to provide aid under the extremely difficult circumstances in Yemen. We appreciate the update that we received.

The multifaceted crisis in Yemen continues to be a source of grave concern. After three years of devastating war, it is deeply worrying that, as a State, Yemen has all but ceased to exist, as the Panel of Experts on Yemen stated in its final report (see S/2018/68). That is something that one finds very painful and that leaves one numb — a State virtually disappearing when it would have been possible to prevent it. Perhaps it is not too late, and we believe that it is not. The claim that the State has all but ceased to exist may be a slight exaggeration.

All the same, the escalation of military activities continues unabated, claiming the lives of civilians and resulting in the destruction of civilian facilities. The territorial integrity of Yemen is yet to have an effective custodian. Furthermore, it is deeply disturbing that there is not any progress towards a peaceful political settlement of the conflict. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant have not hesitated to exploit the crisis, continuing their attacks, including the most recent suicide bomb attacks

on Saturday, with the ultimate goal of acquiring and governing territory.

We are concerned that that is threatening the security of the region and beyond, including the Horn of Africa. The deep-rooted and multifaceted crisis in Yemen demands an urgent and comprehensive political solution that addresses both the suffering of Yemenis as well as the concerns of the countries of the region. Given the catastrophic situation in Yemen and its spillover effects in the region and beyond, we stress the primacy of diplomacy in order to find durable political solutions, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen. We therefore reiterate our position that the Yemeni crisis can be resolved only through a comprehensive political solution. We support the diplomatic efforts of the United Nations, and we urge the parties to cease hostilities and resume political talks under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy. We call on all parties to seize this opportunity to engage with the newly appointed Special Envoy to reinvigorate the political process.

As Director Ging stated, we are also deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian crisis. The country is on the verge of famine. The devastating conflict has turned Yemen into the worst humanitarian crisis of our time wherein we have witnessed one of the worst cholera outbreaks in recent times. The economic crisis is worsening with the likelihood of the collapse of the Yemeni banking and financial system. Public services, including the health and educational systems, are collapsing. In addition, access to the effective delivery of humanitarian and commercial supplies remains a major challenge.

It is not necessary to say more concerning the painful challenge than what Director Ging has already said, for which we are grateful to him. The international community should continue to support the humanitarian work of the United Nations and its partners in a coordinated manner. In that regard, we encourage donors to extend their generous support in financing the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion. Accordingly, we hope that the 2018 pledging conference to be held in Geneva in April will be successful. Furthermore, to provide life-saving aid to all Yemenis who are facing unprecedented needs, regular, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is critical. The protection of civilians and civilian facilities also remains imperative.

Lastly, we hope that the Council will reach a consensus on the draft Yemeni presidential statement, which, we believe, would send a unified message in support for the people of Yemen at this very critical time, but this is a man-made humanitarian tragedy, as has already been said. A quick resolution will be possible if there is a political will on the part of all. We are hopeful that the latter will be forthcoming before all is lost.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the holding of this meeting on Yemen, which allows the Security Council once again to discuss the serious crisis that has been raging in the country over the past several years.

First of all, my country thanks Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for their excellent briefings, as well as Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, in his capacity as Chair of the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) for the work that he is doing.

I will centre my statement on two points: the political process and the humanitarian situation in Yemen. As we can see, the political process in Yemen is currently at an impasse that has been the source of concern and a call to action for the entire international community for more than a year. The parties to the conflict continue to clash, and the prospects for a political settlement are becoming increasingly remote, thereby running the risk that Yemen will become a failed State, to the detriment of its people, who ask only to live in peace and in the pursuit of happiness, like other peoples throughout the world. Concerning that escalation, which is jeopardizing the stability of the entire region, Côte d'Ivoire calls on all parties to reach an immediate cessation of hostilities and commit in a meaningful way to a political settlement of the crisis.

It is up to the Yemeni parties to realize the tragedy that their country is undergoing and take ownership of the political process through an inclusive and sincere dialogue, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, with a view to peacefully resolving the crisis. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire commends the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen in the framework of consultations with the Yemeni parties, aimed at giving

new impetus to the political dialogue in that country. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the commitment of the parties to the conflict to taking part in the forthcoming peace talks in Muscat, and urges them to participate meaningfully and in good faith in those talks.

Côte d'Ivoire also remains concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Indeed, with more than 22 million people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance, the situation in the country appears to be one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, and the number of internally displaced persons continues to rise. We are being told that approximately 2 million children — and, I might add, women — are suffering from malnutrition. The dramatic worsening of the humanitarian situation is a direct result of the political, security and economic instability that Yemen has experienced for more than three years. Côte d'Ivoire calls on the parties to the conflict to reach a ceasefire that would ensure the unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country urges the international community to take appropriate measures to prevent the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Côte d'Ivoire accordingly welcomes the reopening by the Arab coalition of the various ports, thereby allowing for the delivery of food and enabling all forms of humanitarian activity. My country requests that the coalition do more insofar as it remains possible. Moreover, the Ivorian delegation also welcomes the United Nations launch of the Yemen 2018 humanitarian response plan, to which the generous contributions of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are to be commended, and calls on other donors to contribute to funding the programme so as to meet the needs of the Yemeni people.

Concerning violations and abuses committed by the parties to the conflict, the gravity of which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General underscored earlier, my country calls for an immediate halt to such violations and urges the parties present to facilitate the mission of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in September 2017 under the provisions of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire thanks Special Envoy of the Secretary General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless efforts to resolve the crisis in Yemen and commends him for the outstanding work that he has been able to accomplish. At the same time, it welcomes the appointment of the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, to whom it wishes him every success in the accomplishment of his mission and assures him of its full cooperation.

In order for all the good we wish for Yemen to occur, the Council will have to work as one with a single objective in mind: to put an end to the conflict in that country.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We wish to begin our statement by welcoming and paying special tribute to the efforts of Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, who has performed his role with great responsibility, prudence and perseverance in extremely difficult circumstances. We also thank Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for his precise yet broad overview of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

Peru is dismayed by the humanitarian situation in Yemen and considers it urgent to reach an inclusive political solution to the conflict. After more than three years of violence and pain, in which none of the warring parties has achieved military or territorial gains, it is clear that there is no military solution. We therefore consider it essential that the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, be able to count on the strong support of the Security Council and on the assistance required for the complex task of re-establishing dialogue among all parties involved so as to resolve the conflict. That will require a major coordination effort between the Council and those countries with the capacity to influence the warring parties, based on a cautious and balanced approach to developments in Yemen. In that spirit, we strongly condemn the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Yemen attributable to the various actors involved in the conflict. These must be properly investigated, and those responsible must not go unpunished.

It is imperative that the Council remain united and consistent in assuming its responsibility to protect civilian populations in all humanitarian crises, wherever they occur, in line with international law and international humanitarian law. In this regard, we must ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the more

than 22 million Yemenis who need it. The humanitarian crisis must be addressed immediately, in parallel with and independently of the political process, which implies the permanent opening of ports, especially Al-Hudeydah, as Yemen is a country completely dependent on the importation of food, medicine and other goods, as well as the opening of Sana'a airport for commercial flights and emergency medical evacuations, among other urgent measures. It also calls for the cessation of all barriers to assistance, threats to humanitarian workers in the course of their work, and the establishment of conditions that seek to impose the place and manner in which aid is distributed. We hope that these points and others relating to the humanitarian field will be agreed upon in the presidential declaration which is currently being negotiated and which we hope to adopt as soon as possible.

We would like to express our support for the United Nations 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, and welcome the announcements of significant contributions from members of the coalition, in particular Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are expected to be channelled through the response plan, as well as other donors. We also welcome the renewal of Yemen's sanctions regime, whose 2140 Committee we have the honour to chair. We therefore believe that it is important to deter and restrict the ability of individuals or entities that threaten peace, security and stability and to contribute to the achievement of a political solution in Yemen.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We would like to join others in thanking Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed, and Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. John Ging, for their updates.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the committed efforts of OCHA and other humanitarian organizations aimed at easing the suffering of Yemeni people in such difficult and challenging circumstances. Since this is Ismail's last briefing, my delegation wishes to sincerely thank for him for his dedication to his work and for his contributions to finding a way to resolve the protracted crisis in Yemen. We wish him every success in his future endeavours. We welcome the appointment of the incoming Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and stand ready to extend our full support to him and his mission.

We are alarmed by the continued dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. It is necessary to increase the humanitarian response and provide unhindered access to all areas of the country, in compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law. We therefore welcome the decision of the coalition to keep all Yemeni ground, air and sea ports open, in order to allow the flow of supplies in and out of the country. In such critical conditions, it is important that the United Nations engage with all interested parties to have a clear plan for further action to ease the humanitarian situation and reach a comprehensive political settlement.

We welcome the United Nations 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion to assist more than 13 million people. We express our appreciation to the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, together with the United Nations to host a pledging conference for Yemen in Geneva in April. We also express our appreciation for the pledge made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to contribute nearly $1 billion to the United Nations response plan and their commitments to raising an additional $500 million from others donors in the region. We welcome the delivery, with the help of the United States, of four World Food Programme cranes to Al-Hudaydah, as well as plans to install four additional cranes in other ports.

Humanitarian aid may provide a temporary solution but can never compensate for the absence of a fully and adequately functioning Government. Efforts are therefore necessary to settle the intra-Yemeni tensions. To avoid further deterioration, all sides must demonstrate sincerity and flexibility so as to adequately resolve the complex issues of withdrawal of forces, disarmament and the formation of a Government of National Unity. We are confident that only a political settlement will be able to end this human-made crisis, and we call on all States that have influence on the parties to the conflict to make every effort to end the hostilities through inclusive and comprehensive dialogue and negotiations.

In conclusion, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2402 (2018) yesterday (see S/PV.8190), which renewed the sanctions regime until 26 February 2019 and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 March 2019, in order to allow the Council and the international community to work further on the conflict.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Envoy Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed and Director John Ging for their briefings. I wish especially to thank Special Envoy Ahmed for the unrelenting efforts he has made over the past three years to facilitate the political process in Yemen. He has been fulfilling a daunting task in difficult circumstances and his efforts have been apparent to everyone. We note our highest regard for him and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The situation in Yemen further deteriorated of late. The political process is stalled, military conflict continues, and the humanitarian crisis has deepened. China finds the current situation disturbing and calls on the international community to step up mediation efforts, encourage the parties to agree on a ceasefire, return to the political track and achieve peace, security and stability at an early date.

China welcomed the Council's unanimous adoption yesterday of resolution 2402 (2018), renewing the mandate of the Yemen sanctions regime and its Panel of Experts for another year, which should facilitate the international community's efforts to promote peace, and which is consonant with the interests of Yemen and the other countries of the region. China has consistently held an objective and impartial position on Yemen, with no self-interested motives. We support Yemen's unity, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, and we believe that a political settlement is the only way for it to achieve lasting peace. We call on the parties to support the mediation efforts of the United Nations and — based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, and the outcome documents of the National Dialogue Conference — to find an inclusive solution as soon as possible through dialogue and negotiations.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and hope that all the parties will support his mediation work and step up their efforts to promote peace talks. We urge them to break the political stalemate as soon as possible and to return to dialogue and negotiations to resolve their differences. The international community and the countries of the region should provide constructive assistance in that regard.

China has noted the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. With the ongoing cholera outbreak and millions of Yemenis facing the imminent threat of a serious famine, we fear for the country's suffering people. The international community should increase its humanitarian assistance with a view to alleviating the suffering on the ground. We will continue to provide the Yemeni people with aid to the extent we are able, through both bilateral and multilateral channels. Ensuring unhindered access for humanitarian assistance will be crucial to alleviating the situation on the ground. The parties concerned should make concerted efforts to provide safe, secure and unhindered humanitarian access in order to help create the conditions needed to ease the humanitarian situation on the ground.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin this statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his report, which we were briefed on this morning by Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who for almost three years has spared no effort in working to find a solution to the serious and devastating crisis in Yemen. We thank and commend him for his noble work. He is leaving his job with his head held high, after working diligently to fulfil the task he was entrusted with. We also thank Mr. John Ging for his similarly informative briefing as Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Both his and Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's reports described an extremely serious situation on the humanitarian, political and social fronts.

Equatorial Guinea is very grateful to you, Mr. President, for your excellent stewardship of the Council and for ensuring that the Council's work has been carried out to everyone's satisfaction, one tangible proof of which was yesterday's adoption of resolution 2402 (2018), one of the two resolutions we adopted yesterday, which will ensure continued dialogue between all the active political forces in Yemen, in accordance with previous Council resolutions. We firmly believe that the new resolution will make it possible for the international community to achieve its objectives in the tragic political and humanitarian situation that Yemen is currently enduring.

In our view, it is the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security — which is the chief task of the Security Council — that we must take into account if we are to achieve the purposes and objectives of today's resolution, with the aim of resolving the current chaotic situation in Yemen in the areas of peace and

security, humanitarian issues and sustainable human development in its broadest sense. It is urgent that we take action with the support of the international community and in accordance with Security Council rules, in order to provide an appropriate and sustainable response to the conflict in Yemen, which is likely to continue doing enormous material and human damage to its people.

We have seen from the most recent report of the Panel of Experts (S/2018/68) that the humanitarian situation in Yemen is devastating, and that is why we hope that with the adoption of the resolution submitted by the Russian Federation yesterday, we can achieve the satisfactory outcome so long desired by every member of the Council, since the continuing current situation only encourages the terrorist groups that have sprung up all over the country. We call on Yemen and its allies to comply with the resolution with a view to ending the country's humanitarian crisis and alleviating the economic, social and cultural problems facing the people of Yemen. We commend Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their significant support in that regard.

Lastly, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges Member States to comply strictly with the arms embargo outlined in resolution 2216 (2015) and to refrain from creating obstacles to Yemen's access to humanitarian assistance, where more than 20 million people are suffering from critical deprivation. In conclusion, we call on the parties involved in the conflict to resume the political process with a view to alleviating the humanitarian crisis and the war's severely damaging impact on the civilian population, as described in today's briefings.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Kuwait.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings this morning.

The recent developments on the security and political fronts in Yemen are very worrying and have exacerbated the situation and the stalemate in the political process, which is the result of the clear obstinacy of one of the parties to the conflict, the Houthis, who have refused to engage with the United Nations efforts to end the crisis or even to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The State of Kuwait reaffirms the fact that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. The only way to settle the conflict is through dialogue and a political solution that must be based on the three reference points agreed on — the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome document of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015), which is one of the basic pillars for resolving the crisis in Yemen.

Historically, Kuwait has worked since the 1970s as a mediator to bring its brothers in Yemen closer together. In 2016, Kuwait spent more than 100 days hosting peace talks between the Yemeni parties under the auspices of the United Nations, in an effort to achieve a peaceful settlement to the conflict, based on the three reference points that constituted a road map. We made those efforts because we hope to see the brotherly nation of Yemen enjoy stability and to prevent bloodshed among its people. Everybody, including the parties to the conflict, considered the peace talks that took place in Kuwait a historic opportunity for our brothers in Yemen to bring an end to the conflict.

There is another aspect of the crisis that should the Security Council should focus on. We all know about the Houthis' firing of ballistic missiles at our brother country Saudi Arabia.

By 5 February, 95 missiles had already been launched against Saudi Arabia. Kuwait condemns in the strongest terms the launching of ballistic missiles by the Houthis against Saudi Arabia, as well as their alleged attacks on the United Arab Emirates. This is a dangerous development that threatens regional peace and security, challenges the will of the international community and undermines efforts to reach the aspired political solution to the crisis. We also affirm Kuwait's full support for our brothers in Saudi Arabia and for all the measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to safeguard its security and stability. In that context, we underscore that the Security Council cannot accept a non-State actor threatening a sovereign State by launching missiles that endanger the stability and security of the region. Those rocket attacks must be condemned every time they occur.

The security of seaways is also important and we cannot be complacent in dealing with them. A clear message must be sent that attacking or threatening to attack vessels or mining the Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea is absolutely unacceptable. This must be condemned as well.

At the humanitarian level, it is important for us to do more to alleviate humanitarian conditions for the people of Yemen. In Kuwait, we are well aware of that humanitarian aspect. We participated in the donor's conference held in Geneva in April 2017, where we committed to providing approximately $100 million in humanitarian assistance. Countries of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen are continuing to make efforts to reduce the suffering of the Yemeni people. On 22 January, the coalition announced a comprehensive plan of humanitarian operations in Yemen, which was hailed by Secretary-General Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock. The plan includes a generous contribution from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates amounting to $1 billion in humanitarian aid, amounting to nearly one-third of the entire 2018 United Nations appeal for assistance in Yemen. We hope that the coalition will be able to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground by the end of 2018.

In conclusion, and since this is the last briefing of Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, I wish to express our gratitude for the work he and his team have done over almost three years since he started working to resolve the Yemeni crisis. In Kuwait, we have closely witnessed the efforts he has made in the peace talks. We hope to be able to work with our new Special Envoy, Mr. Griffiths. We pledge our full support for him in carrying out his duties.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month as it draws to a close. I commend your wise stewardship of the Council's proceedings and thank you kindly for giving us the opportunity to speak before the Council. Moreover, I would be remiss if I did not convey our most heartfelt congratulations and salutations to the brotherly people of Kuwait on the occasion of their national day.

I would like to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. We thank him for the great efforts he has made throughout his tenure of almost three years with a view to resolving the Yemeni crisis that was created by the Houthi coup in Yemen. The coup has destroyed Yemen's capacities and has set it back hundreds of years.

I also take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Yemen, to welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy for Yemen. We look forward to working with him in the same constructive spirit and flexibility that we have shown thus far, in order to reach a lasting peace in my country, Yemen, that would put an end to the state of absolute annihilation and to the war that the Houthis have been waging against our people since September 2014.

On 16 February, and upon the instructions of my Government, I sent a letter to the Secretary-General in which I noted the important and sensitive historic moment that coincides with his appointment of a new Envoy. In that letter, I expressed the readiness of our Government to work with him in accordance with the terms of reference agreed upon by the Yemeni people, which have enjoyed the support of the international community. Those terms of reference are the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive national dialogue that was supervised by the United Nations throughout 2013 and resulted in a reconciliation document reflecting the aspirations of all factions of Yemeni society. It is also in line with the relevant Council resolutions pertaining to Yemen, especially resolution 2216 (2015), which lays the necessary groundwork for resolving the conflict in Yemen and is a reflection of the Council's understanding of the fundamentals of the problem in Yemen.

As the members of the Council understand, no sovereign State can accept the presence of armed militias like the Iranian Hizbullah within its territory, controlling part of it and using violence and heavy weaponry to hijack the State and forcefully impose their own agenda. Moreover, they are attacking neighbouring States by firing Iranian-made ballistic missiles, recruiting children, destroying cities and displacing

their population, in clear violation of international, humanitarian and human rights law.

We beseech the Security Council — which has been unified and clear-sighted in its position since the beginning of its engagement in the Yemeni crisis in 2011 — and Mr. Martin Griffiths to make it their mission to ensure the Houthis' compliance with Council resolutions in order to prevent them from benefitting from their crimes against humanity. If the Council and Mr. Griffiths succeed in that effort, armed militias would no longer be encouraged to continue their attacks on legitimate entities, and from spreading terrorism and chaos.

Peace cannot be achieved in my country without the exit of the Houthi militias from the cities and State institutions that they have occupied and pillaged. They must return the weaponry that they stole from the military and security State institutions, especially the ballistic missiles that have been provided to them by Iran. They must end their aggression against neighbouring States and stop carrying out the functions of the State. They must stop committing the gravest violations of international law — the recruitment of children. That is the only way to ensure lasting peace.

I have repeatedly underscored in the Council that the Houthis cannot be reasoned with. They will not abide by international law, humanitarian law or human rights law. Like the gangs of Da'esh and AlQaida, their mentality is not bound by legal or historical frameworks. They will not accept any sustainable peace that would restore State authority to Yemen. The Houthis are working — and this is publicly stated by their masters in Tehran — to destabilize not just Yemen, but the entire region in order to uphold Iran's expansionist agenda. They only understand the language of violence and they see, in the hesitation and leniency of the international position, an opportunity to pursue their expansionist aggressive plot. The Special Envoy has just said that the Houthis are not willing at this stage — and I say at any stage — to offer security concessions or to engage in formulating the details of a comprehensive security plan. This is the basic dilemma for a comprehensive solution. In Kuwait, they refused to sign a full and comprehensive proposal based on Tehran's instructions.

Yesterday, the Council failed to send a clear message to Iran, which will serve only to encourage that country and its terrorists in the region, including Houthi militias in Yemen, to continue along their path. The ambiguous messages conveyed by the Council yesterday will lead to increased levels of violence, ballistic missiles and further tragedy on the ground. I would like to thank the States that voted in favour of yesterday's draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom. The fact that Iran is in a state of non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015), as concluded by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), is simply clear proof of its policy to destabilize the entire region. Moreover, the launch of 95 Iranian-made ballistic missiles carried out by Houthi militias against the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in the report published by the Panel of Experts on Yemen (S/2018/68), are proof of an international terrorist plot masterminded by Iran — a rogue State that sponsors international terrorism and continues to spend billions of dollars to support terrorist organizations in the region, including the Houthis in Yemen, while its own people suffer a shortage of basic supplies.

The unprecedented humanitarian suffering in Yemen continues and worsens day by day in the twenty-first century. The systematic destruction of all official State institutions, private and public property and houses of worship; and the intimidation, terrorization and humiliation of unarmed civilians; and the recruitment of children sent to die on the front lines have occurred in all parts of Yemen territories controlled by coup forces. Citizens starve while the black market thrives. Our people's capabilities being eroded in broad daylight. These are all violations of international law, values and human norms. In his briefing, Mr. John Ging mentioned that the Houthis disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid every day.

The 2017 annual report submitted by the Panel of Experts cites staggering statistics of the theft of public funds and the illegal accumulation of wealth by Houthi militias, which have stolen more than $5 billion since they occupied the Yemeni capital of Sana'a. They continue to plunder the revenue of local industries, including tax revenue and that of the Al-Hudaydah and Salif seaports, not to mention the funds derived from dual taxation imposed on the citizens, and the sale of oil products on the black market. The report indicates that all Yemeni companies that import oil products are newly established and associated with Houthi militias. Moreover, the Panel estimates that $6.75 billion has been stolen over the past three years. Coup forces continue to

starve our people in areas under their control and refuse to pay civil servants or cooperate with the international community and the Office of the Special Envoy. They have stated that if the international community wants civil servants to be paid, it should provide the funds.

Humanitarian suffering has reached appalling levels. This year the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated its humanitarian response plan for Yemen will require nearly $3 billion. Coalition States led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have pledged and donated $1.5 billion, for which we are very grateful. We commend the comprehensive humanitarian plan launched by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, which includes all relief sectors, economic relief and recovery efforts on the road to reconstruction. I call on all members of the Council and the States Members of the United Nations to quickly make pledges to cover the requirements of this year's humanitarian response plan for Yemen.

The Houthi militias use the humanitarian crisis of the Yemeni people as a shield, and to advance their own political agenda. They pretend to be victims and blackmail the international community. I have repeatedly warned that some in the Security Council view the Yemeni issue simply as a matter of providing humanitarian relief in the absence of a political solution. The international community's inability to pressure the Houthis to come to the negotiating table and implement the requirements of resolution 2216 (2015) will prolong the war and the crisis in Yemen. The money that countries may donate will not be enough to save the 27 million Yemenis facing disaster in the diaspora or in their own country, which is being destroyed by the Houthis in a vengeful and vindictive manner. Yemen is one of the wealthiest and most beautiful lands in the world. Anyone who has visited can attest to that. I call upon the Council to put pressure on the coup forces that reject peace efforts, and hold them accountable before the entire world.

In conclusion, the people of Yemen beseech the members of the Council to stand by them at this historic and crucial time, as they have done since the start of the political transition crisis in 2011. Our people, with their glorious past and generous spirit, stand before the Council and call on its humanity to stop this war and end the coup. Our people cannot be left begging for crumbs at the table. Millions of Yemeni youth cannot be left to drown in a sea of despair or wander in foreign lands in an attempt to escape the clutches of the Houthis, Al-Qaida and Da'esh terrorist gangs.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.